MAD CAVE

DAVE CHISHOLM

IS TED OK?

4

IS TED OK?

DAVE CHISHOLM
STORY, ART & LETTERS

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Digital Version.

MAD CAVE

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THESE MILITARY--

--AH, **MILITIA** OPERATIONS.

WE'LL GET TO THAT.

LET'S TALK SOMETHING ELSE FOR NOW.

OK.

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN NOTICING MOVEMENT **INSIDE** OF THE DOME.

LEGEND-BUILDING AND MYTHMAKING IS SO FUN.

OUR OWN LITTLE LOCH NESS MONSTER OR BIGFOOT.

I LOVE IT.

SO, THERE'S NO ACTIVITY INSIDE THE DOME?

THE RADIOACTIVITY IN THERE IS OFF-THE-CHARTS. IT'S BASICALLY A PORTAL TO HELL.

PEOPLE HAVE SEEN MOVEMENT.

YOU'RE **SUCH** A PLANNER, I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THAT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE AFOOT HERE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU.

THE ONLY **PLAN** I HAVE IS ONE OF LEADERSHIP.

STEWARDSHIP.

THERE'S THAT WORD AGAIN--

--LEADERSHIP.

UMM...NOAH™?

ARE WE SAFE UP HERE?

OF COURSE NOT.

I COULD PUSH YOU OFF--

--NOBODY HERE WOULD LIKELY CARE IF YOU FELL TO YOUR DEATH.

CREEK

YOU COULD ALSO PUSH **ME** OFF AND GET RIPPED APART BY MY THRONGS OF FOLLOWERS!

I'M **KIDDING,** KYLE!

GET A SENSE OF HUMOR!

I WANTED TO SHOW YOU THE AMAZING VIEW!

THAT'S QUITE A VIEW.

I TELL PEOPLE THAT THIS TOWER IS LINKED TO AN AYN-STYNE SATELLITE--

--SOMETHING ABOUT ALL OF THE COMMUNICATION GOING INTO AND LEAVING TENT CITY BEING ROUTED THROUGH THIS SPOT--

--BUT THAT'S **NOT TRUE.**

THIS TOWER DOESN'T DO **SHIT.**

I JUST LIKE TO COME HERE FOR A SILENT MOMENT.

CIRCLING BACK, DO YOU THINK THAT SOMEONE PLAYING WITH ARMIES AS IF THEY WERE **TOYS--**

--PLAYING WITH HUMAN LIVES, WITH THE FUTURE OF CIVILIZATION--

--IS FIT FOR **"LEADERSHIP"?**

SPACESHIP EARTH NEEDS A LEADER-- A **CAPTAIN--**

--A BOLD MAN WITH A GRAND PLAN.

AND YOU THINK **YOU'RE** QUALIFIED TO CAPTAIN **EARTH?**

IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

WHY?

BECAUSE YOU'RE **WEALTHY?**

ISN'T CAPITALISM WONDERFUL?

SO, **THAT'S IT,** THEN?

IT'S LIKE A FORCE OF NATURE.

A **LAW** OF THE NATURAL WORLD.

IT BOILS DOWN TO ONE WORD:

YOU STARTED WITH AN INHERITANCE THAT **DWARFS** WHAT MOST--

COMPETITION.

LET'S GO BACK TO MY TENT.

THERE'S ONE MORE THING I NEED TO SHOW YOU.

IT'S THE SCOOP OF A **LIFETIME.**

WHAT COULD BE MORE FUNDAMENTAL THAN THE EDICT OF **COMPETITION?**

IT'S AN EXCELLENCE-CREATING MEAT GRINDER.

A MACHINE FOR INNOVATION.

"SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST."

"DOG-EAT-DOG."

THOSE ARE NICE CLICHES, NOAH™, BUT YOU'RE FORGETTING ONE:

"WINNER TAKE ALL."

YOU'RE IGNORING THE FACT THAT COMPETITION HAS AN **ENDING** BUILT INTO ITS PROCESS--

--LOTS OF **LOSERS**--

--AND **ONE** WINNER.

YOU OWN ***TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND*** CORPORATIONS--

--AND, RIDICULOUSLY, **EVERY** ARMY CURRENTLY ON THE BRINK OF A CATASTROPHIC WAR.

YOU'RE A **TRILLIONAIRE.**

YOU'RE THE MOST **POWERFUL** PERSON IN THE WORLD.

THE COMPETITION IS **OVER**--

--YOU **WON,** NOAH™.

FLAP!

AND, ONCE YOU REACH THAT CONCLUSION, COMPETITION **ITSELF** LOSES ALL UTILITY--ALL **MEANING.**

WHEN IS ENOUGH **ENOUGH?**

KRUNG!

WHAT **IS** THIS, NOAH™?

LET'S TALK ABOUT VIOLENCE, KYLE.

TED, SARAH--

--IT'S GREAT TO MEET BOTH OF YOU.

I'M DR.CHRISTINA PAGANINI. I USED TO WORK FOR NOAH™ IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

VERY TIP-TOP-SECRET STUFF.

HE LET ME GO A DECADE AGO--

--I MEAN, NOT **REALLY,** NOT ENTIRELY.

IT'S A LONG STORY, POINT BEING:

I KNOW WEIRD SHIT IS HAPPENING AT AYN-STYNE.

HOW'D YOU KNOW WHERE WE'D, *UH*...

...WHERE WE'D **LAND?**

THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING--

--I SET UP A MONITORING SYSTEM FOR THIS VERY MOMENT.

I WAS **READY.**

AND NOW, I'VE GOT MY GPS SET, WE'RE DRIVING TO MY CABIN OUT IN THE STICKS, AND WE'RE GOING TO MAKE A **PLAN.**

A PLAN FOR WHAT?

I KNOW IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW HOURS SINCE I LAST CALLED YOU, BUT--

A PLAN TO DESTROY AYN-STYNE.

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY MIGHT WANT TO DESTROY US FIRST!

--I MEAN, IT FEELS LIKE **DAYS.**

SHIT.

FASTER THAN I THOUGHT THEY'D BE.

I DON'T HAVE A TON OF TIME. IT'S JUST--

WHY ARE THEY--

--WHY DO WE EVEN **MATTER?**

I DON'T KNOW, TED--

--MAYBE BECAUSE YOU SURVIVED GETTING **SHOT IN THE HEAD** AND THEN YOU FLEW US **TWENTY MILES AWAY?**

--SOME MOMENTS ARE SO BIG--

--AND I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T BREATHE, AND--

HOLD ONTO YOUR HATS, KIDS--

GULP

--THERE'S NO WAY I'M OUTRUNNING **KARMA** TODAY.

--EVEN JUST **IMAGINING** THAT YOU'RE HEARING THIS HELPS.

RIGHT NOW I'M IN THIS TINY BATHROOM AND IT REMINDS ME--

--AND I NEED A HAPPY MEMORY RIGHT NOW--

--DO YOU REMEMBER THE PLACE WE STAYED IN PARIS--

--DO YOU REMEMBER THE BATHROOM?

DAMMIT!

SKREEF

IT WAS LITERALLY A TOILET IN A CLOSET.

YOU HAD TO **BACK IN** IF YOU WANTED TO CLOSE THE DOOR.

AND, GOD FORBID, IF YOU TOOK A SHIT IN THERE--

YOU OK, SARAH?

--IT'D SMELL UP THE WHOLE PLACE!

ANOTHER FUCKING CAR ACCIDENT?!

NO VENTILATION!

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN AWFUL, YOU KNOW?

BUT IT WASN'T.

BAM!

BECAUSE **YOU** WERE THERE.

WE WERE IN IT TOGETHER.

SHIT SHIT SHIT.

YOU'D NEVER GUESS IT, BUT I'LL ALWAYS CHERISH THAT MEMORY.

FEELS LIKE A PAST LIFE, YOU KNOW?

A **UNIVERSE** AWAY.

OUTMUSCLED, OUTGUNNED, OUTMANEUVERED.

SORRY, KIDS--

--WE'RE SITTING DUCKS.

AND I WONDER IF THAT'S HOW **THIS** IS GONNA FEEL SOMEDAY.

TED GREEN!

I SPEAK ON BEHALF OF AYN-STYNE'S **KARMA** SQUAD!

PLEASE STAY CALM AND REPORT TO THE FRONT LINE.

I HAVE FORM 104.6B FOR YOU--

--OUR TIME-OFF REQUEST FORM!

WE JUST NEED YOU TO FILL IT OUT--

-- AND EVERYTHING WILL BE OK.

WHAT THE FUCK?

HE'S LYING.

LIKE A WEIRD-ASS FEVER DREAM.

I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU TEN SECONDS TO COMPLY!
TEN!
NINE!
EIGHT!
SEVEN!
SIX!
FIVE!
LIKE AN IDIOTIC NIGHTMARE.
FOUR!
THREE!
TWO!
ONE!
ZERO!
THIS PECKERWOOD. GIVE ME THE **ASSET.**
THIS'LL GET HIM.

TED!

I HAVE HERE THE CAT YOU KNOW AS "JONNY."

WHAT?!

JONNY?!

IF YOU WANT THIS CAT TO LIVE, PLEASE REPORT TO THE FRONT LINE AND FILL OUT FORM 104.6B--

--IN TEN!

NINE!

EIGHT!

SEVEN!

ANOTHER COUNTDOWN?

COME ON.

I **HAVE** TO GO UP THERE! JONNY IS--

--I ***HAVE*** *TO!*

SIX!

FIVE!

TED--

FOUR!

THREE!

JESUS.

--WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER.

I'M COMING WITH YOU.

B-BUT--

WE TRUST EACH OTHER, RIGHT?

TWO!

ONE!

LEAVE JONNY ALONE!

WE'RE COMING!

SOMEDAY I'LL LOOK BACK ON THIS AND WONDER IF IT EVEN **HAPPENED.**

OH, GOD DAMMIT.

YEAH, WE ONLY NEED TED.

MS. VARNER, YOU CAN CONSIDER YOUR CONTRACT WITH AYN-STYNE TERMINATED FOR ASSAULTING A K.A.R.M.A. OFFICER.

I SAID **ONLY TED.**

TED, BUDDY, WE NEED YOU TO COME BACK TO WORK AND--

YOU DON'T NEED TO SPEAK INTO THE MICROPHONE ANY MORE.

WE'RE RIGHT HERE.

DID YOU KNOW THAT SOMETHING LIKE 35% OF MEMORIES ARE FALSE?

GIVE JONNY TO SARAH.

I'LL GO WITH YOU.

FINE WITH ME.

I HATE THESE THINGS.

TOSS!

TED?

YOUR BRAIN JUST MAKES SHIT UP TO FILL IN THE GAPS.

IT'S OK, SARAH.

TAKE JONNY, GO WITH CHRISTINA.

I'M--

--I'M SORRY I RUINED YOUR LIFE.

YOU DIDN'T.

THESE ARE ALL DECISIONS I MADE, TED.

THAT'S PROBABLY JUST FOR THE **BORING** STUFF, THOUGH.

WHAT'S WITH ALL THIS, BRODY? AN **ARMY?**

FOR WHAT?!

DON'T GET ME WRONG--

FOR *ME?*

--I **WANT** TO FORGET THIS STUFF BUT I DOUBT I'LL BE ABLE TO.

OFFICIAL ANSWER?

YOU'RE **VERY** GOOD AT YOUR JOB, TED.

YOU'RE **SO** VALUABLE TO THE COMPANY, TED.

NOBODY ELSE CAN DO WHAT **YOU** DO, **TED.**

SO WHAT'S THE **UNOFFICIAL** ANSWER?

WHAT **AM** I?

YOU SHOT ME IN THE FACE!

HOW AM I STILL HERE?!

SEE ANY LITTLE GREEN MEN LATELY, TED?

WHY ARE YOU SAYING THAT?

AM I AN **ALIEN?**

IS **THAT** WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?

HAHA, ALRIGHT, BUDDY.

CALM DOWN. LET'S--

CALM DOWN?!

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SHOT IN THE FACE, BRODY?!

HEY, TED, COME ON, NOW--

IT'S NOT FUCKING COOL!

IT MAKES ME THINK, IS THIS **ALL** LIFE IS?

ONE SECOND YOU'RE *THERE,* JUST--JUST--

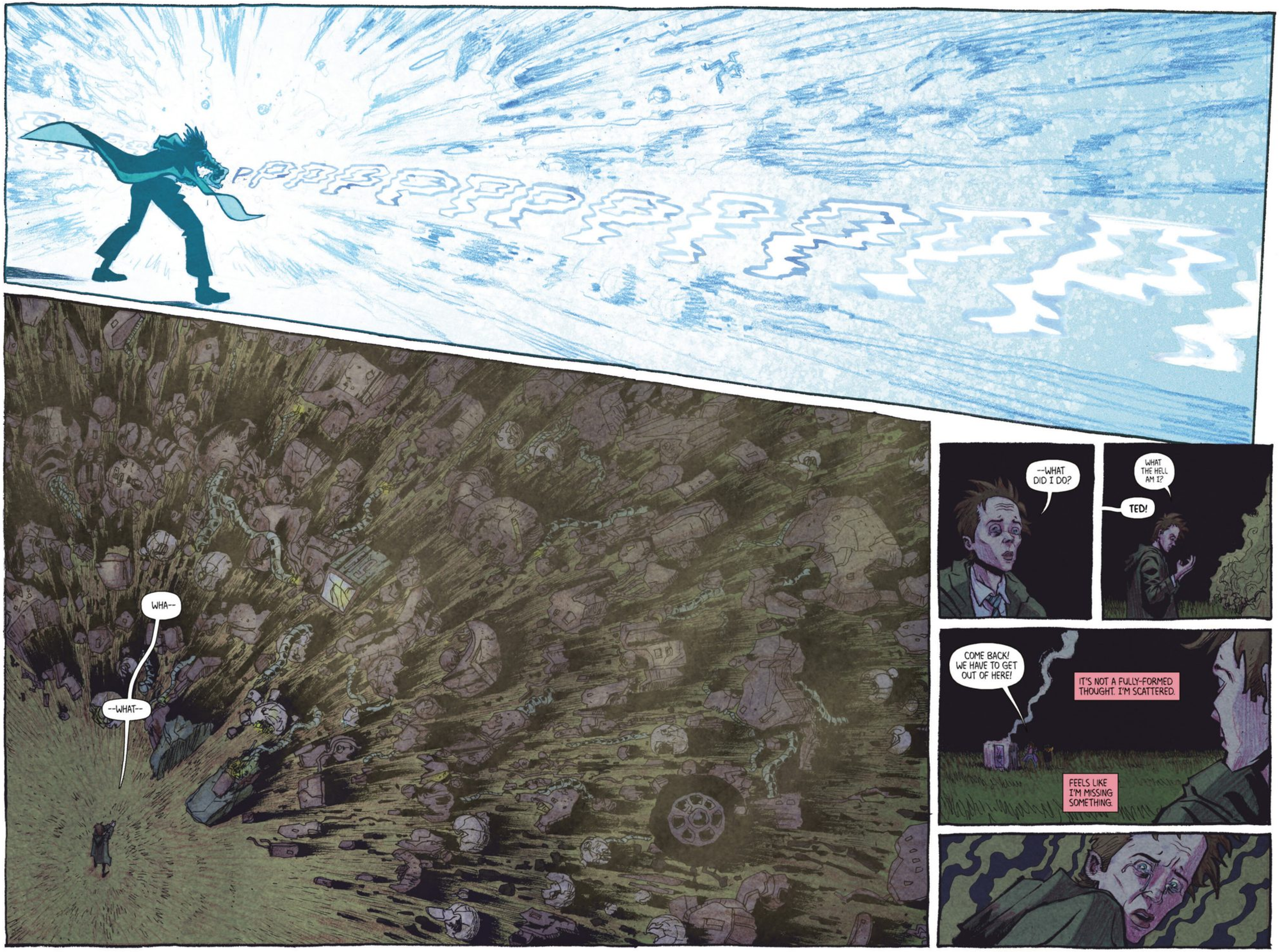
--JUST *LIVING YOUR LIFE,* AND THEN--

TENTPOLES--

--SPREAD OUT ACROSS A HUGE SPAN OF TIME--

--WITH A BUNCH OF FORGETTABLE SYSIPHUS BULLSHIT CRAMMED IN BETWEEN?

THOSE BASTARDS DID IT.


WHA--
--WHAT--
--WHAT DID I DO?
WHAT THE HELL AM I?
TED!
COME BACK! WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!
IT'S NOT A FULLY-FORMED THOUGHT. I'M SCATTERED.
FEELS LIKE I'M MISSING SOMETHING.

I GUESS WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT SOME OF THOSE EVENTS--EVEN ORDINARY, STINKY ONES LIKE THE PARIS BATHROOM--

--THOSE MEMORIES I WANT TO NESTLE INSIDE OF. I WANT TO **LIVE** THERE.

OTHER ONES--

TED--

--ARE YOU--?

DID I KILL THOSE PEOPLE?

BRODY?

--OTHER ONES I WANT TO GET AS FAR AWAY FROM AS POSSIBLE.

WE'LL GO INSIDE, GIVE JONNY SOME FOOD.

TED, I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

SARAH, TED, DO YOU WANT SOME TEA?

UM, SURE--

--I HOPE JONNY GETS ALONG WITH THESE CATS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE HERE--

--WHEREVER **HERE** IS.

TED.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY UNUSUAL OR REMARKABLE **DREAMS** LATELY?

UMM--I--

--I HAVE THE SAME NIGHTMARE, EVERY NIGHT--

--IT'S THIS VIOLENT--

--DID I JUST KILL THOSE PEOPLE?

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR UPBRINGING.

ANY NOTABLE EVENTS FROM YOUR CHILDHOOD?

WELL, I, UM, YOU KNOW, I HAD A PRETTY AVERAGE CHILDHOOD, I GUESS. SUH--SUBURBAN, SPORTS-COACH DAD--

IN THE VAN, SARAH SAID YOU WERE SHOT IN THE FACE. DID YOU DIE?

--ARE THOSE PEOPLE DEAD?

DIG DIG DIG

WHAT THE HELL, CHRISTINA?

I **WAS** SHOT IN THE FACE, SO YEAH.

I DIED.

I MEAN, **CLEARLY** SOMETHING ELSE HAPPENED--

WHERE DID YOU GO WHEN YOU DIED?

I WENT TO THIS...

...FLAT PLACE, WITH THESE BIG STRUCTURES AND...

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT, CHRISTINA?

GIVE HIM A SECOND-- HE'S--

ALL THE PARANOIA, ALL THE SUFFERING, TED.

I'M DEEPLY, TRULY **SORRY** FOR ALL OF IT.

AND I'M SORRY TO HAVE TO TELL YOU...

...**NONE** OF YOUR CHILDHOOD MEMORIES ARE REAL.

I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.

--IT'S ALWAYS SO UNCANNY.

LIKE A NEWBORN.

I LIKE TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO SPEAK TO THEM WHEN THEY GAIN SENTIENCE.

LIKE **YAHWEH,** BREATHING LIFE INTO **ADAM.**

UFO

YOUR MIND HAS BEEN FILLED WITH LIES, TED.

TED-- TED-- --YOU'RE GONNA BE OK.

WHUH-- --WHUH-- --WH-- --WH--

ANYWAY, I'VE GOTTA HANG UP. I'M IN CHRISTINA'S BATHROOM-- THEY'RE WAITING FOR ME.

YOU CAN TAKE THE GOGGLES OFF NOW.

--NUH-- --NUH--

RIGHT. OF COURSE. SORRY. --NOT-- --WHAT I--

I'LL TELL YOU **EVERYTHING.** I'LL TELL YOU **THE TRUTH.**

MAYBE WE'LL FINALLY GET SOME ANSWERS.

WHEN THE TOWER OF BABEL WAS KNOCKED DOWN, **THE LORD** DISPERSED HUMANITY ALL OVER THE WORLD AND SEPARATED US THROUGH LANGUAGE--

--ALL THE DIFFERENT NATIONS HAD DIFFERENT LANGUAGES--

--ALLEGEDLY, ANYHOW.

THE LORD--?

WHAT?

BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE--

--WE ALL **DO** SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE.

IT'S THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE OF ALL LIFE THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

YOU PROBABLY THINK I'M TALKING ABOUT **MATH,** RIGHT?

YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT **VIOLENCE.**

I **AM** TALKING ABOUT **VIOLENCE,** KYLE.

IT'S THE **ONLY** LANGUAGE THAT COMMUNICATES ACROSS ALL CULTURAL BORDERS.

SAY *"HI"* TO *"KAREN,"* OUR GUIDE DOWN THE RIVER.

KAREN?

WHAT **IS** THIS?

YOU KILL **ONE** PERSON, YOU'RE A MURDERER, AND YOU'RE BANISHED.

KILL **A HUNDRED,** YOU'RE A SERIAL KILLER.

KILL **A THOUSAND,** YOU'RE A CONQUEROR.

WH--WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT? WHAT'S THE POINT, NOAH™?

LET'S EMBARK, KAREN.

KILL **A BILLION--**

SNAP

--WELL...

...THEN YOU'RE **A GOD.**

I DON'T LIKE THIS.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE--

--WE NEED TO TURN AROUND.

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

IT'S A SHORT JOURNEY, ANYWAY.

KAREN, PLEASE INCREASE OUR SPEED.

WHAT-- WHAT **IS** THIS, NOAH™?

WHERE ARE WE?

IS IT GETTING HOTTER?

WHY DO YOU THINK I **NUKED** THIS SPOT, KYLE?

WHA--

--WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

I THOUGHT YOU HAD A **BIG, LIBERAL, GALAXY BRAIN, KYLE?**

AFTER ALL, YOU DID SOME ***DIGGING*** AND YOU DISCOVERED MY ***BIG PLAN!***

WHA-- WHAT FUCKING **PLAN,** NOAH™?!

YOU'RE WAGING AN IDIOTIC WAR AGAINST **YOURSELF!**

AND--WHAT YOU'RE SAYING--

--THE NUKES--

--**YOU** STARTED THE--

--THE WAR?

YOU'RE BREAKING MY ARMMMMAAAAUUUGHHH!

"IDIOTIC WAR"--

--WHICH ONE OF US IS THE **TRILLIONAIRE,** YOU LITTLE TURD?

CRNCH

YOU--YOU ABSOLUTE FUCKING--*HNNG*--YOU ABSOLUTE FUCKING **MORON!**

YOU'RE GOING TO BREAK THE WORLD!

IT'S NOT ABOUT **BREAKING** THE WORLD, KYLE!

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT?!

IT'S ABOUT **LEADERSHIP!**

KRUNG!

GAAH!

THIS IS MADNESS!

THE RADIATION IS GOING TO KILL B-BOTH OF US!

DO YOU THINK I GIVE A SHIT ABOUT **DEATH,** KYLE?

WE'RE ENTERING A **POST-DEATH** WORLD.

MY MEAT-SUIT **HUSK** WILL MELT AWAY AND MY CONSCIOUSNESS WILL LIVE ON ETERNALLY--

--LEADING THE PEASANTS OF SPACESHIP EARTH TO A TRULY **HAPPY** FUTURE!

VRRRRRRRR

VRRRRRRRRRRR

IT'S A **SHAME** YOU CAN'T JOIN US!

TO BE CONTINUED...

MAD CAVE

DAVE CHISHOLM

IS TED OK?

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AVAILABLE JUNE 2026

MAD CAVE

TOBIN

JUNK PUNCH

NO.1

OLIVARES VIVALDI ESPOSITO

I AM EATING PEANUT BUTTER!

BARE BUTT PEANUT BUTTER

OH, I AM SO VERY IMPORTANT.

I HAUNT COMMENTS SECTIONS

I AM SHARING PEANUT BUTTER!

!!

??

HERE'S MY CREDIT CARD. AND...WOULD YOU LIKE MY **PHONE NUMBER,** TOO?

UGH.

LA LA LA LA-LA-LADIES' MAN!

THEN...

JUNK PUNCH

JUST...DON'T
Blackout Drunk is our specialty!

WHYYYY?

SORRY. LIKE SO MANY OTHERS HERE IN BILLOWING CITY, I HAVE A CHEMICAL AFFLICTION. MINE IS THAT I COMPULSIVELY PUNCH PEOPLE IN THE JUNK.

BUT I'M CUTE, SO IT'S CHARMING!

WAIT...JUNK PUNCH? CLARA CASTANELLE?

YES. THAT'S ME. AND...*YOU?*

I MEAN, YOUR FACE IS FAMILIAR. A FRIEND? AN EX-LOVER? A CURRENT LOVER?

I'M BARRY STORCH, BUT...WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS...I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

I KNOW YOU HELP PEOPLE IN TIMES OF GREAT NEED, OR WHEN YOU'RE TOTALLY DRUNK AND JUST WANT TO FUCK AROUND A BIT, AND...

...I NEED HELP!

READ THE FULL ISSUE
NO.1
JUNK PUNCH
JUNE 2026

MAD
CAVE